STATE OF ARKANSAS
House of Representatives

Arkansas House Newsletter

December 5, 2025

Legislative Committees Convene in Hot Springs

The House and Senate Agriculture, Forestry, and Economic Development Committees met jointly this week at the Hot Springs Convention Center during the Arkansas Farm Bureau's annual state convention. Lawmakers received updates on issues shaping the future of agriculture and rural communities across the state.

Arkansas State University briefed members on the progress of its College of Veterinary Medicine, scheduled to open in Fall 2026. The program will allow students to earn a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree in Arkansas for the first time, strengthening the pipeline of veterinarians needed across the region. ASU expects to enroll 120 students in its first class, with at least half coming from Arkansas.

Members also heard an update on the ongoing concerns surrounding the Illinois River Watershed. Poultry growers in parts of Arkansas and Oklahoma are facing an uncertain future due to a decade-long lawsuit between poultry companies and the state of Oklahoma. Tyson Foods officials told lawmakers they will honor existing contracts but will not offer new ones in the watershed unless Oklahoma eases its current demands.

Poultry is Arkansas’s largest agricultural sector, generating more than half of the state’s agricultural cash receipts. In 2023 alone, the industry produced an estimated 6.67 billion dollars in economic impact, with broilers accounting for about 40 percent of that total. More than 6,500 farms across Arkansas raise some form of poultry, making any disruption in this sector a significant concern.

Committee members are now reviewing the information and considering potential paths forward as they work to support growers and maintain stability in the state’s agricultural economy.

Also this week, the House and Senate Education Committees met at Park Magnet School in Hot Springs, where they toured the International Baccalaureate World School and the Main Street Visual and Performing Arts Magnet School. These visits give lawmakers a clearer understanding of the strengths and challenges in Arkansas classrooms and help guide future funding decisions.